

Attorney General's Office
Methamphetamine Meeting

Wednesday, October 11, 2006
2:00 - 3:30 pm
Cape Girardeau County Sheriff's Office
Jackson, MO

Sheriff John Jordan, Cape Girardeau County Sheriff, opened the meeting and mentioned that work that the Attorney General has done in promoting multijurisdictional agreements between Missouri law enforcement and law enforcement in bordering states. He also mentioned efforts in Iowa to insert an additive that significantly reduces the yield from anhydrous ammonia, making it more difficult to make meth.

Attorney General Nixon offered some opening remarks and thanked the attendees for coming to the meeting. He commented that funding for meth efforts should be based on law enforcement needs not just on the number of labs taken down. Further, it is not productive to use the number of labs busted by itself to determine the success of our efforts.

Importation of meth into Missouri has grown in recent years so that the amount of meth in Missouri is relatively unchanged despite the reduction in meth labs.

On treatment, the key is determining how to turn around the cycle of drug abuse. Many dollars have been spent on treatment but there is insufficient data on success rates.

Morley Swingle, Cape Girardeau Prosecuting Attorney, offered the following observations:

- We have effective laws to prosecute meth offenders - example: possession of any amount of meth with intent to distribute is a penalty of 5 - 15 years in Department of Corrections and that crime becomes an A felony for a 2nd offense
- Task Forces and the Highway Patrol, Drug and Crime Control Division, needs more resources. As many drug cases are multi-county in nature, the expertise of the task forces and Highway Patrol is critical - more funding is needed for these efforts. There is more work than manpower.
- Crime labs need assistance. In Cape Girardeau, the Highway Patrol now runs the crime lab. But it may take 6 weeks before tests become available. This is a problem when the preliminary hearing is only 2 weeks after the

arrest. DNA evidence is becoming more important in solving cases - Mr. Swingle mentioned a local case where a rape was solved through DNA evidence when the offender was processed into Department of Corrections. He thinks that DNA will eventually be used more in drug case s as well.

Mike Alford and **Brenda Cone** work with the Southeast Missouri Drug Task Force. They have seen a reduction of labs from 2005 (36 labs) to 2006 (25 to date). They also said that a smaller number of the labs are “active” labs.

- They commented that the law restricting access to pseudoephedrine has been helpful. They make over 5,000 entries every 2 weeks and work with other local law enforcement to compare these entries.
- One significant problem is that the Wal-Mart in Jackson cannot communicate with the Wal-Mart in Cape Girardeau. As a result, law enforcement has to spend many hours going through the logs.
- A person purchasing over the legal amount commits an A misdemeanor. They think that penalty should be higher.
- They support a prescription monitoring program which would include a field for someone’s “known associates” - that would help law enforcement in pursuing these cases.

Attorney General Nixon asked if there is a need to monitor other types of drugs. Also, there was discussion about how to operate a monitoring program that only flags a potential violation at a certain point.

- **Alford** and **Cone** said that importation of meth is definitely up and mentioned that it is coming in by mail, FedEx and truckers.
- They support drug courts but, according to Alford, meth is the worst drug he has seen in 14 years and it is difficult to treat.
- On importation, a major source discussed was Blytheville, AR. A large supplier is located there and there have been recent discussions about how to address that.

Attorney General Nixon asked about what types of drugs they are seeing in the schools. They said that most of the drugs are marijuana and prescription drugs like Xanax or Valium. **Krystal McLane**, Drug Court Case Manager for the Juvenile Court, also said that prescription drugs are a problem among juveniles.

Rick Haas is a Substance Abuse Counselor with SEMO Community Treatment in Ironton. He has been involved in treatment since 1970 and says that in Iron County meth is a serious problem.

He provided a history of the meth problem, noting that in the 1960's and early 70's, diet pills (a form of amphetamines) were being abused. Today, he said the drugs of choice in his treatment area are beer and meth. The alcohol is a depressant while the meth is a stimulant. As a result, many use meth to get through the day. He noted that meth is highly toxic and that there is a rapid tolerance to it.

He talked about the “culture of meth.” Those using alcohol and meth combine them to manage their lives and deal with their emotions. He said that his program, called ADEPT (a version of SATOP), sees juveniles as young as 13-15 years old injecting meth.

As for programs, Haas said that a 30 day program is not a magic bullet but can start a process of change. He said the best approach we have right now is drug court. The discipline required - have random urinalysis, must hold down a job, pursue GED - as well as the length of the program - 14 to 18 months - is what is needed to turn these offenders around. He compared this approach to Probation & Parole where the meth user often knows when the urinalysis will be done - that is not much of a deterrent.

Haas said while it is possible for a meth user to fake it in drug court, it is difficult to do.

Mike Alford commented that, once law enforcement gets over the “touchy feely” approach of drug court, he agrees that it is a better alternative to probation and parole.

Commissioner Pinkston, Drug Court Commissioner for Scott and Mississippi counties, said the Public Defender’s Office has stepped out of the drug court cases and they have lost the attorney perspective as a result. He also commented that funding is a tough issue statewide. He said that the NCAP funding is ended for the juvenile court.

Jim Ray, Clinical Director for the Family Counseling Center in Cape Girardeau, commented on his center that treats young addicted mothers. He said that drug courts work because they promote the necessary coordination between the various parts of the justice system.

His facility is a 32 bed residential facility for women and children. He has to turn away a number of people who would like these services. The Family Counseling Center has 2 facilities for men (Kennett and West Plains) and 2 for women (Hayti and Cape Girardeau). His facility is primarily funded through Medicaid.

His facility focuses on co-occurring disorders like traumas, sexually transmitted diseases and bipolar disorder. Treatment focuses on a cognitive and behavioral approach. He said

that the body must get back into working order. He said he uses a “matrix model” along the lines of Hayselton, Valley Hope and Betty Ford - all of which are evidence based.

He mentioned that the longer a person is in treatment, the better that person’s chances of success will be.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.